

TASTES OF SUMMER AT LAKE COMO

# Tastes *of* Italia

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AUGUST 2014

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AUGUST 2014

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Home Style



# BOSTON'S

An immigrant to this Italian enclave has found success in bringing





# NORTH END

the culinary treasures of his homeland to the iconic neighborhood.

**By Lauren Birmingham Piscitelli ■ Photography by Bobby DiMarzo**



## Home Style

**T**here is a long, rich history of Italian immigrants who came to settle in the North End Boston. From 1892 to 1954, over twelve million immigrants entered the United States through the portal of Ellis Island, and they all had the same dream. Signor Frank DePasquale is one of them.

"I dreamt about bringing my Italian culture to America ever since I was a child. The first time my family journeyed to America was in 1955. I was just four years old. We traveled as a family, with my mom and dad, Angelina and Giuseppe, and my older sister

Loridanna," tells Frank. He is the owner of DePasquale Ventures, the Italo-American restaurant empire in Boston's North End.

"We came from a small town just east of Naples, called Sant Giuseppe Vesuviano, and my father was in the confetti business. (Confetti are the pastel colored, sugar-covered almonds that are served at Italian weddings, baptisms, communions and special occasions.) We thought his business would have worked in America, but it did not. People here just do not celebrate with confetti like they do in Italy. It was tough, so our family moved back to Italy only to return to Boston four years later, giving it another try. Like all Italian immigrants, we lived with relatives; ours were in Somerville, and then we rented a home in Cambridge," he says.

He tells me his story from a small café table at The Gelateria & Cannoli Factory, part of the DePasquale Venture group. It's 9 a.m. and outside Hanover Street is already buzzing. An Italian waiter named Marco has just served two steamy cappuccinos

and everything is delicious. The smells of freshly-made cannoli, handmade hazelnut gelato and rich black Lavazza coffee fill the air. Frank is an authority on Boston's great Italian neighborhood. He was one of the 12 million courageous Italians who moved here at the height of the immigration period.

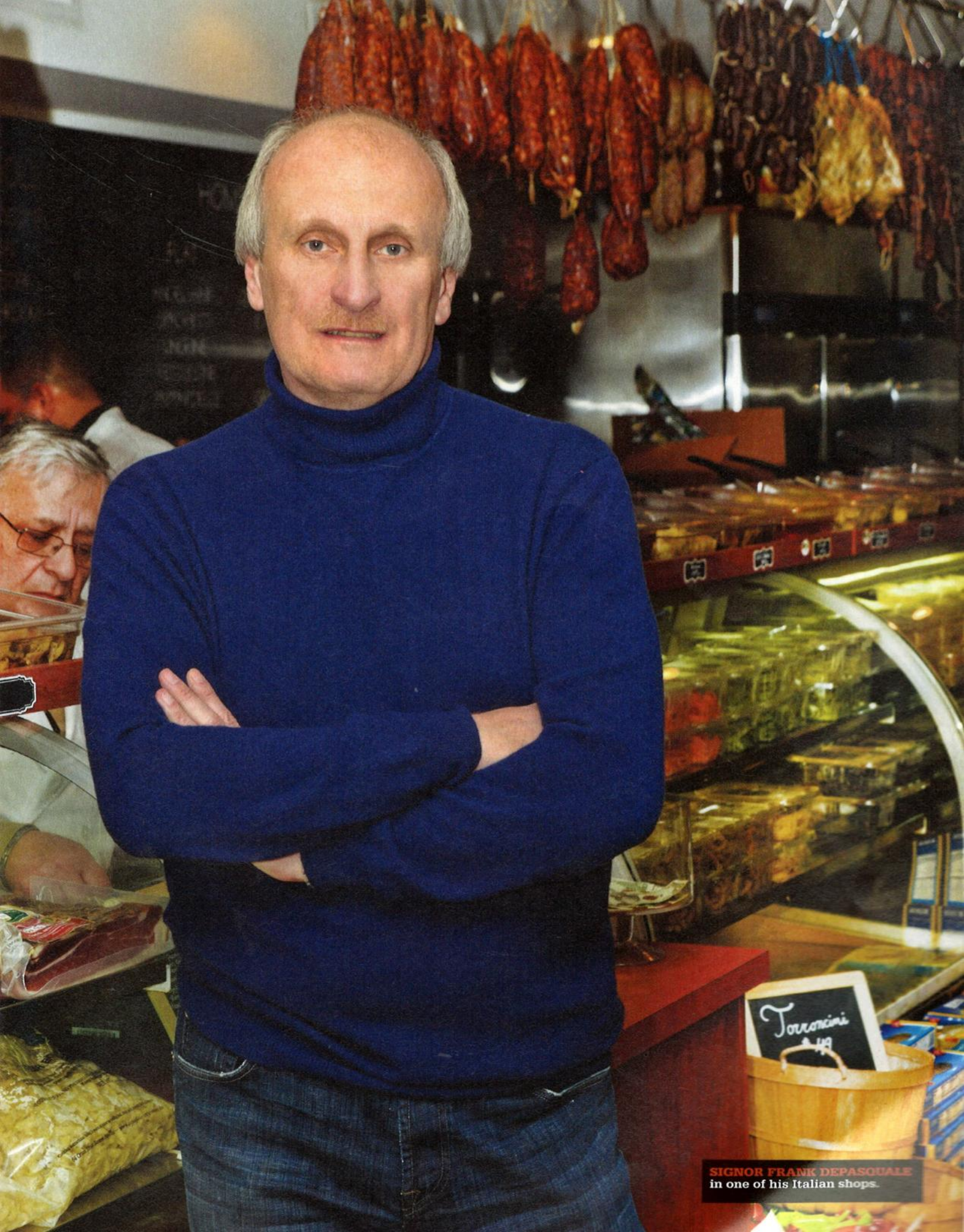
Through it all, he wanted to bring the Italian way of life to America. Like his parents, he continued to work hard, and his true passion for Italian food and cuisine prevailed. In 1987 he purchased il Panino, a traditional Italian sandwich shop. His signature Parma Proscittto (imported Mozzarella di Bufala, tomato and fresh basil sandwich on crispy Italian bread) immediately made headlines, and there were lines out the door. He expanded the menu and changed the name to Trattoria il Panino. Today the trattoria serves authentic Italian antipasti, assorted specialty pasta (made in his pasta shop), fresh fish, meat and desserts.

His empire also includes Umbria Prime, a full scale, two level restaurant noted for



**PIZZA NEAPOLITANO** is one of many authentic foods served by the DePasquale Venture Group.





**SIGNOR FRANK DEPASQUALE**  
in one of his Italian shops.



## Home Style

its hormone-free steaks. With its Umbrian villa style setting and Italian staff, you feel like you're in Italy. Then there is Bricco Ristorante, an upscale, open kitchen restaurant with executive chef Gianni Caruso (from Abruzzi) at the helm serving traditional fare like delicate fried calamari, brick oven baked



Baci stock the shelves. Salumi, prosciutto, pancetta and homemade sausage, along with 50 types of homemade pasta (ravioli, fusilli, spinach gnocchi, fettuccine and pappardelle to name a few) made daily, are brimming in the glass showcase.

Lastly there are the Bricco Suites, a bou-

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polenta and porcini, branzino (traditional Italian sea bass) and cinghiale (wild pig) and desserts from scratch. A few steps away (just off Hanover on Richmond Street) is Mare Oyster Bar, featuring an extensive fish menu, an expansive raw bar with fresh lobster, oysters, clams and specialty pastas that match up with fish.

The Gelateria & Cannoli Factory, another one of his creations, is a café and ice cream shop serving up homemade gelato, cannoli, crepes, espresso and cappuccino. There is also Bricco Panetteria, an authentic artisan bread shop baking brick oven breads made by Neapolitan hands with olives, grains, wheat and prosciutto with cheese. For una vera pizza Neapolitano, there is Quattro, a grill, rosticceria and pizzeria serving up classic pasta e fagioli, pizza Margherita, grilled chicken, fish and meat, handmade pastas and desserts. For all your home cooking needs there is Bricco Salumeria, an authentic Italian market and deli with fresh mozzarella, ricotta, buratta and provolone. An all Italian product line of extra virgin, first cold pressed olive oils, Italian olives, house made tomato sauce, cooking herbs and chocolate

tique hotel with 15 suites (some are two bedroom and 10 additional ones are under construction) that include maid and security service.

"I always liked everything that was Italian and always tried to create the very best Italian lifestyle here in the United States," says Signore DePasquale. "The one thing that I was always passionate about was food—Italians are very passionate about food. That is all they talk about from morning to night... where are they going to buy it, what product they are using, how they are going to put it together, how to eat it and how to digest it," he laughs.

Frank has been a thriving force in the North End with his Italian food and culture including his importation of talented young chefs, bread makers, pizzaioli from Italy to his kitchens, giving them housing, employment and opportunity. He also keeps the local community up to date with Scene Magazine. The glossy magazine, put together by creative director Bobby DiMarzo, is published six times per year and delivers news on Italian food, chefs, fashion trends and style. He has also developed the DePasquale

Ventures Foundation, an organization that donates money to various neighborhood causes including the Casa Monte-Casino (a home for children from Italy, where he donates food for their events and recently purchased new beds for the home). He supports a long list of neighborhood organizations in-



cluding the Sacred Heart and Saint Leonard Churches, library, Nazzoro Center, nursing home, and a culinary internship program for aspiring chefs.

He also created the North End Chamber of Commerce whose mission is to make sure that neighborhood businesses have a say in the community and that it remains safe. He is known as a well respected leader with a big heart who makes things happen. DePasquale not only has helped revive the area for Italians and Italo-Americans, but for visitors who come to Boston for good Italian food.

In his restaurants he has served Billy Crystal, Robert De Niro, Danny Aiello, Tom Cruise, Tom Brady and Giselle Bundchen, Ashley Simpson, Jay Leno, Rudy Giuliani, Lorraine Bracco and Ben Affleck, to name a few. Andy Garcia is a regular and a friend. "One time, the entire New York Yankees team came in to dine and ended up at my home to watch a boxing match with my son and I," he says.

He explains how "the North End was not always an Italian neighborhood. First there were the Irish and then the Jewish," he says.

The Italians started to settle in during the



# PERFECT CANNOLI



## Cannoli

If you're inspired by the cannoli made in authentic Italian restaurants and bakeries, like those found in Boston's North End, try making your own at home using this simple recipe.

- 1 (32-oz.) container ricotta cheese, drained
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 4 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 tablespoon Frangelico liqueur
- ¼ cup diced candied cherries
- 12 cannoli shells (you can find these at most Italian food stores or bakeries)
- Powdered sugar for dusting

In a large bowl, combine cheese, powdered

sugar, chocolate, liqueur and diced cherries; mix well. Using a tipless pastry bag or a heavy duty plastic bag, fill with cannoli cream. (If using a heavy duty plastic bag, cut off about 1/2-inch from one corner.) Gently squeeze the cream into the shells, one end at a time. Dust with powdered sugar. Add additional chopped cherries and chocolate, if desired. Serve within 30 to 40 minutes.

Makes 12 servings.



## Home Style

1860s. According to historians, they unified themselves in the small neighborhood and worked to recreate what they knew best—Italian food and crafts. They sold fruit and vegetables and peddled wine, cheese, olive oil and fresh fish from pushcarts. They found jobs in construction and used their artisan hands to build bridges and roadways. By 1900, Italians had firmly established themselves in the North End. By 1920 the neighborhood had Italian doctors, dentists, dressmakers, cobblers and barbers. By 1930 it was nearly 100 percent Italian. Hanover Street was in business thanks to the Italians who opened small Italian markets, butcher shops and bakeries.

Frank is one of many Italian immigrants who came to Boston for a better life. Today he carries the torch adding to the culture and heritage. Before him there were men like the Pastene and Prince Spaghetti creators.

Luigi Pastene came from Sicily in 1848 and settled in the North End. He started selling Italian food products from a pushcart on Hanover Street. By the mid 1870s his business had grown. By 1900 he had expanded Pastene along Fulton Street in the heart of the North End. His company continued to grow, forcing it to move to bigger quarters in Canton, Mass. Today Pastene is North America's oldest importer of premium Italian products and a leader in the Italian food category. It still remains a family run business.

In 1912 another success story happened in the North End and a dream was realized by three Sicilian friends, Gaetano LaMarca, Giuseppe Seminara and Michele Cantella. They started a macaroni spaghetti business called Prince Spaghetti in a small brick building at 92 Prince Street. LaMarca was the administrator, Seminara was the salesman and Cantella was the pasta maker. Prince Spaghetti was an instant success. Five years later they had expanded and constructed a seven-story building on Commercial Street. In 1939 Giuseppe Pellegrino, another Sicilian immigrant, joined the Prince partnership and the company moved to Lowell.

Frank remembers the black and white TV commercial called "Wednesday is Prince Spaghetti Day." It featured Anthony Martignetti, a young Italian boy of about ten years old, running through the streets of the neighborhood while his mamma called out "A-n-t-h-o-n-y! A-n-t-h-o-n-y!" from an open window of a second floor apart-



**PANE AT** one of Frank DePasquale's shops.

ment building. Anthony (a real boy from the neighborhood and not an actor) runs alongside street vendors and wooden crates filled with fruits, vegetables and fish, while the narrator says, "Anthony Martignetti lives in Boston on Prince Street in the Italian North End, the home for more than 50 years of the Prince Spaghetti company. Anthony knows a lot about local Italian customs and he knows a lot about Prince, because that is a local custom too. Prince is more than just authentic, it's something that grows you with wheat germ energy that other pastas leave out. Most days Anthony takes his time going home, but not today. Today is Wednesday and as every family in the North of Boston will tell you, Wednesday is Prince Spaghetti Day."

It cuts to his mom's kitchen. There is a pan of boiling water and his mom drops the pasta in the pan. Anthony arrives out of breath. His mother smiles as the big Italian family is seated around the table. The commercial ran 13 consecutive years.

Boston's North End is also home to America's first Italian-American newspaper, *La Gazzetta dell Massachusetts*, founded by James V. Donnaruma in 1896. He was only 16 years old when he first arrived from Saler-

no with a dream of creating the first Italian language newspaper that would give a genuine voice for the many Italians who had migrated also at that time. Today it's called the *Post-Gazette* and is managed by his third generation granddaughter, Pamela Donnaruma, publisher and editor.

Frank also remembers, "The Italians all worked for other people until we had enough money to buy our own homes and open up our businesses." Today he travels back and forth to Italy regularly keeping traditions and culture alive.

As we finish our café and conversation, the smell of just-baked bread billows in from Bricco Panetteria. Frank DePasquale has come full circle. "This has been a lifetime of passion, bringing the Italian lifestyle to Boston. Today the North End is one of the premier Little Italy establishments in the country. The tradition goes on and we want our children to remember the simple things, the traditions of our parents."

Visit [www.DePasqualeVentures.com](http://www.DePasqualeVentures.com).

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# THE RECIPES

## Spaghetti alla Carbonara

- 1 pound fresh spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces of pancetta
- 1 garlic clove
- 4 large eggs
- ¼ pound Parmigiano Reggiano, plus extra for serving
- Salt and pepper
- Fresh parsley to taste

While pasta is boiling, prepare the sauce. (Very important that pasta is hot and ready to place in the sauce). The heat of the pasta will cook the raw eggs.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil; add the fresh pasta and cook 2½ to 3 minutes. Drain pasta and save 1/2 cup of the water the pasta was cooked in.

In a pan, heat 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Add the pancetta and sauté. Add the garlic clove.

Add the drained pasta to the pan and toss for a minute or so. Beat the egg and Parmigiano Reggiano together.

Remove the pasta off the heat and pour the egg mixture over it, whisking quickly until the eggs thicken. Thin out the sauce, according to personal taste, with the pasta water. Add salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with fresh parsley. Add extra cheese if

desired.

Makes 4 servings.

— Recipe courtesy of Signor Frank DePasquale, Bricco Ristorante

## Cauliflower Salad

- 1 head of cauliflower, broken up into flowerets
- 10 anchovies, packed in oil, drained
- ½ cup black olives
- 3 to 4 pickled red peppers, cut into strips
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- Capers to taste
- Salt and pepper
- White wine vinegar
- Extra virgin olive oil

Boil or steam the cauliflower until al dente. Drain and rinse under cold water and let dry. Once cool, add the anchovy fillets, olives, red peppers, capers, and garlic. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Drizzle the olive oil, a bit of white wine vinegar and salt to taste. Mix all ingredients well.

Let the salad rest for at least a few hours (overnight is best).

Makes 4 servings.

## Pizza Chiena

Don't let the name fool you. Though it's known as "Easter Pie," this dish is enjoyed year-round. The filling is quite ample, so use a 13x9x2-inch baking dish that's been brushed with oil.

### For the dough:

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 large eggs
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- ½ cup water

### For the filling:

- 2 pounds whole milk ricotta
- 6 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup finely grated Pecorino Romano cheese
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- ½ pound prosciutto, thinly sliced
- 1 pound fresh canestrato (Italian basket cheese) or other mild, semisoft cheese, cubed
- ½ pound soppressata, cubed
- ½ pound capicola, cubed
- ½ pound salami, cubed
- ½ pound shredded mozzarella

### For the egg wash:

- 1 large egg, well beaten with a pinch of salt

### For the dough:

Combine the ingredients and mix until the dough forms a ball. Place the dough on a floured work surface. Press the dough into a rough rectangle and wrap it in plastic. Refrigerate the dough for at least 1 hour.

### For the filling:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Put the ricotta in a large mixing bowl and beat it smooth with a large rubber spatula. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Beat in the pepper, grated cheese, and parsley. Set aside briefly. Mix in all cold cuts and shredded mozzarella.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator. Cut in half. Press half the dough firmly into the bottom and sides of the pan and leave any excess dough hanging over. Pour in the filling.

For the top crust, roll the remaining piece of dough to a 9 x 13-inch rectangle and arrange it over the filling. Brush the top crust with the egg wash. Trim the edge of the bottom crust to an even 1/2-inch overhang and fold it onto the top of the pie, over the top crust. Cut four, 2-inch vent holes in the top crust with the point of a knife. Cook until the crust is golden and filling is set about an hour.

Makes 6 servings.

